

# Thinking clearly

**John Galloway** finds lots to get the creative juices flowing freely in the latest version of Inspiration

Computers aren't capable of creative thought (yet). Only people can do that. But what computers can do is to help us to do it better, with greater clarity: organising, recording and shaping our thoughts so that we both remember more easily and understand the relationships between concepts more clearly. *Inspiration* was one of the first packages to do this and has continued to develop ever since, providing more tools for thinking and needing less thought to use.

Although not originally designed for it, *Inspiration* has always been a good piece of software for whiteboards, with pupils working as a group, sharing ideas and getting them down quickly. This is now even easier because handwriting recognition for the most popular boards, SMART and Promethean, has been added in. Alongside this, a word guide with instant definitions and alternatives helps encapsulate ideas accurately.

The various views are still there so what may seem to be random arms spreading across the screen can be tidied into neat diagrams or lists of bullet points at the click of a button. Also, a mind-mapping tool has been added, with branches of varying thickness, colour and complexity all emanating from a central idea.

Resources or hyperlinks can be added to every point on the arms. This might be a graphic from the bank of over one million available, a text document with more in-depth detail, an imported video clip, or a sound file, either pre-recorded or made with the built-in recorder.

The option to use it as a writing frame is still available, as is that of directly creating *PowerPoint* slides, although with more choice about

sub-topics and notes. What's new is the ability to create the basis of a website with each point having its own page and links between them being automatically created.

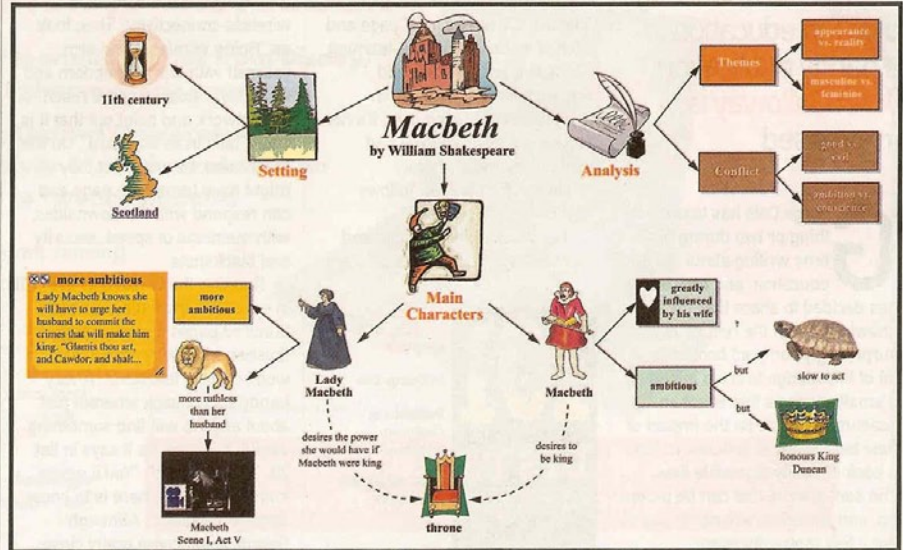
When mind-mapping you can hide and reveal the different branches, link assorted media or web-pages to them and create a sophisticated presentation directly from your original jottings.

This is the sort of software you can get started with very quickly, then get to grips with the more sophisticated aspects as you go. The "Learn to Use" option includes manuals, templates and video files linked from the internet to show you what to do. Once you've started you'll find lots of things to do with it, because this is software that really gets you thinking.

## Inspiration 8

Software package to help you organise your thoughts.  
Price: £59 + VAT  
www.taglearning.co.uk

Fitness for purpose	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



Inspiration 8: helping you to find clarity in your creative thinking